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**CHRISTIAN
UNITY
AT WORK**

AUG 8 1922

***What
The Federal Council
of the Churches
Is and Does***

105 EAST TWENTY-SECOND STREET
NEW YORK CITY

CHRISTIAN UNITY AT WORK

RINGING in our ears more than ever is Carlyle's searching question: "More than of any other institution the world is asking of the Church in these times, Canst thou teach us or not?"

The answer to that question lies largely in another: "Can the Christian churches of America, leaving at one side all the small things that divide, cooperate effectively in that spirit of unity which is necessary to the building of a better world?"

The work of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is a clear and convincing reply. A federation of thirty evangelical denominations, organized in 1908, it has grown steadily and solidly, with no sensational appeal, until it has demonstrated clearly that the churches can and will actually work together in fundamental common tasks.

Purpose of the Council

Created for the purpose of enabling the churches to do together what they

could not hope to do alone, the aims of the Council, as then defined in its constitution, and as now pursued, are as follows:

"I. To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church.

"II. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world.

"III. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the churches.

"IV. To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.

"V. To assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities."

The work of the Council, it is not too much to say, is by far the most powerful influence today in enlarging the spirit of unity within the Church. Not by discussions of differences, nor by theoretical arguments, is the unity of the

Church most furthered but by actually joining hand in hand in concrete service to the community, the nation and the world.

United in Reaching the Community

Throughout the nation there is being built up a constantly increasing number of local federations (or councils) of churches which make possible a far more effective service to the community. There are now more than fifty cities where strong federations with executive secretaries exist. A substantial beginning has also been made in organizing rural communities for cooperative work through State and county federations.

These local councils of churches, initiated and assisted by the Federal Council, are to the religious life of a community as indispensable an agency as a chamber of commerce is to its business institutions. They multiply the power of the Christian forces by consolidating their impact upon the city's life.

The following pages briefly suggest the program of cooperation which the churches are developing in the Federal Council as a whole and in the carrying out of which the councils in local communities are rendering such noteworthy service.

United Evangelism

At the foundation of all the work of the Council is the unchanging task of winning men to personal discipleship to Jesus Christ as Divine Lord and Saviour and building them up in Christian character.

The Council has made no more far-reaching contribution than the work of its Commission on Evangelism in developing a program of united evangelism in the larger cities, with the aim of enabling the churches to reach the whole community at one time and with the ideal of the pastors as their own evangelists. The secretaries in the various denominations are brought together under the leadership of the Federal Council and unite in holding conferences throughout the country, assembling all the pastors of a community and assisting them to organize their forces for simultaneous action.

As a result, a new and better type of evangelism is arising. The last year showed a record of the largest number of accessions to church membership of any single year in the history of the American churches. Conspicuous is the fact that the largest gains are reported in the cities which have adopted this united approach to their evangelistic task.

Increasing attention is now being given to the theological seminaries in the interest of bringing home to the teachers of ministers and to prospective ministers the possibilities of pastoral evangelism.

A United Approach to Christian Education

As the Council is leading the churches to a united evangelistic approach to the community, so also is it seeking to secure a more unified program of Christian education. Guarding carefully against duplicating the work now being done by the many educational agencies, it is seeking to bring all of them into such effective cooperation that a more adequate program of Christian education will result.

At a conference called by the Federal Council last year, representatives of all the Sunday school agencies, the Missionary Education Movement, the agencies dealing with Christian education in the college and university, the young people's societies, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, and other organizations studied together the educational task from the standpoint of the whole Church, with a view to discovering how each of the existing organizations could best cooperate with the others in meeting the whole responsibility.

In addition to carrying on this task of coordination, the Council is directing its attention to the groups largely unreached by any of the present educational forces, especially by interpreting to the general public the significance of the Christian Gospel for the life of men in their industrial, racial and international relations.

United in Social Service

While directing attention to the primary importance of evangelism, the Council holds with its constituent bodies to the conviction that the Christian spirit and the principles which Christ taught must be applied to social life, to politics, to international relations and to industry, and that these principles constitute the basic laws upon which a prosperous and happy social order alone can be built. Those engaged in carrying on the Council's work, and the denominational social service agencies which are cooperating in it, realize fully that the possibility of social advance is directly proportioned to the stock of men in the community who have the Christian spirit.

A Research Department on the relation of the Church to social questions is maintained as a central agency, in which expert study is constantly being

carried on and the results placed at the disposal of pastors, religious editors and interested laymen. A fortnightly "Information Service" records successful work by any church in the social field, and interprets the significance of social and industrial questions from the standpoint of Christianity. The studies of technical experts in the fields of engineering and economics are presented in a way which makes them available for the guidance of the churches. A distinguished theological teacher lately declared that he had found the analysis of the moral issues involved in the railway controversy more impartially and illuminatingly analyzed in the "Information Service" than anywhere else in the whole realm of contemporary writing.

Educational literature on social questions for the use of study groups and Bible classes is being prepared every year for the use of churches of every faith.

The Council serves also as a connecting link between the Church and great social agencies of a national character, such as the American Red Cross, the United States Department of Public Health, and the movement for child welfare and for community organization. More than any other body it affords a contact with the labor movement, in-

terpreting the Christian Gospel to labor, and the ethical and spiritual aspects of the labor movement to the Church. It has also increasing contacts with the great organizations of American industry.

Of noteworthy significance has been the work of the Council in promoting cooperation between employers and employees. A series of conferences on the application of Christian principles to industrial relations has been held during the past year in leading industrial centers, bringing together employers, workers and ministers, to consider how cooperation and goodwill in industry can be secured. Many forward-looking employers of nation-wide prominence have declared that in such efforts the Council is rendering the most fundamental service to our modern industrial life. In Boston, in connection with one of these industrial conferences, sixty-five Protestant pulpits discussed the relation of the Church to modern industry on a given Sunday; the Roman Catholic archbishop prepared a pastoral letter which was read in all of his parishes, and the Jewish synagogues also cooperated.

In the field of temperance the effort to make prohibition effective through moral education in law and order continues to be carried on. Three temper-

ance papers are published—for adults, for young people and for children.

United in Bettering Race Relations in America

In a day when the problem of the relations of the white and the Negro races is challenging America as never before, the recent establishment of the Commission on the Church and Race Relations is a sign of hope. It means that the churches are definitely setting themselves to a solution of the problem on the Christian basis of brotherhood.

Under the wise guidance of Southern leaders, both black and white, the united influence of the churches is being brought to bear to promote the active cooperation of the two races in a program for racial justice and goodwill. They are helping to create inter-racial committees in local communities for the purpose of cooperative activities in securing to the Negro fuller opportunity for self-development, in preventing mob violence and lynching; and in developing a Christian public opinion on the racial question. Before the churches of both races, thus beginning to join hand in hand, there is an opportunity for a service to the nation limited only by the meagre resources thus far available.

**United in Securing International
Justice and Goodwill**

The world-wide interest in disarmament and in international cooperation has set the work of the Federal Council into bold relief. Long a united agency for the churches in their concern for peace, the Council has now become, even in the judgment of the outside world, one of the most effective agents in the world in securing a better day in the relations of nations to one another.

The merest indication of what the Council has done in connection with the movement for limitation of armament will show how far-reaching its influence has been.

On a designated Sunday last June pulpits all over the nation responded to a call of the Federal Council to observe disarmament Sunday and to urge an international conference. Through the assistance of the Church Peace Union the cooperation of Roman Catholics and Hebrews was also secured, and a joint memorial presented to President Harding. When, soon after, he issued the historic invitation to the nations, the Federal Council set out at once to mobilize the churches in helping to create the public opinion that made possible what the Conference has achieved.

Through its educational literature, such as "The Church and a Warless World," "Working Toward a Warless World" and "Problems of the Pacific and the Far East," over three hundred thousand of which were circulated, the one hundred and fifty thousand churches of the country were assisted to become centers of public education on the necessity for reduction of armament. Local federations of churches in all parts of the country were stimulated to hold mass meetings on the subject. A great campaign of educational publicity was carried on through the daily press.

Throughout the Conference a representative of the Federal Council in behalf of the churches was constantly in Washington. Conferences were held with all the foreign delegations.

So pronounced was the public sentiment thus created that Lord Riddell, the distinguished press officer of the British delegation, declared in a public gathering:

"Since coming to America I have been particularly impressed by the work of the Churches. Their campaign of educational publicity through the Federal Council of the Churches has been one of the most effective pieces of work in behalf of peace that I have seen."

In all this program the Federal Council is engaged not in a spasmodic effort but in a persistent campaign. It is now carrying on its activities unabated to secure the participation of the United States in permanent organized cooperation for world peace and human welfare. It is definitely committed to continuing and unremitting activity until a peace-system takes the place of competitive armament and recurring war.

Special attention has long been directed to relations with the Orient. The Council seeks to interpret the best in each to the other and to reinforce the work of foreign missions by removing national misunderstandings and unchristian policies, which would imperil the success of Christian missions in the Far East.

United with the Churches of Other Lands

Enlarging cooperation with the churches of Europe is being secured so that a conscious unity of spirit and purpose among the Protestant churches throughout the world is being developed. A large number of leaders in the American churches who are going to Europe are delegated by the Council to rep-

resent not simply one denomination but the evangelical forces as a whole. Friendly visitors from the churches abroad are constantly received by the Council. Largely as a result of this fellowship, federations of churches are being developed in Switzerland, France, Germany, and other European countries, and related to the movement for Christian cooperation in our own land.

Particularly to the Protestant churches of France and Belgium, devastated by the ravages of war, has assistance been extended. Nearly a million and a half dollars have been contributed by the American churches to their assistance since the war through the Federal Council as a central agency.

Through the helpful cooperation of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches contacts are secured with Christians in all parts of the world.

The increasing cooperation among the churches of all lands is to come to a head in the proposed Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work, to be held in 1924, to consider how the churches of the world can bring about a fuller application of the Christian Gospel in modern life. In the initiation of the conference the Federal Council had a large part and

in the preparation for it assistance is generously given.

United in Works of Mercy

Since international goodwill is best expressed not in words but in deeds of serving love, the Council has offered itself as a servant of the churches in answering calls of suffering humanity. For several years it has been of assistance to Near East Relief. In the European Relief Council, organized by Mr. Hoover to save the children of Central Europe, the Council was responsible for the church activities and drew from Mr. Hoover the tribute that if the Council had not been in existence he would have found it necessary to build up something like it.

The imperative need for such a central agency is now clearly revealed in what the Council is doing for the starving millions of Russia. It is the one interdenominational agency that is giving attention to this overwhelming need,—seeking to appeal to the generosity of all the churches. By distributing its funds through the American Relief Administration and the American Friends Service Committee (Quaker) it avoids duplication of existing machinery.

By supporting the Federal Council with his gifts and thus making possible

a common channel through which such appeals of mankind can be met one is multiplying many-fold what he could otherwise do for his suffering fellow-men.

United at National Capital

In carrying on the work which has been described, frequent contacts with national agencies are necessary. In order to make this possible an office is maintained at Washington, through which the concern of the churches on questions with moral and religious bearing can be interpreted to the nation. Every caution is used to see that these contacts do not take the nature of a political or legislative "lobby." The Washington Office also puts its facilities at the disposal of any church or mission board which desires to have special help at great saving in carrying on necessary business with governmental departments.

Because of its close contacts with the Federal Census Bureau, and other national agencies, the Washington Office is in a strategic position for preparing and issuing the annual "Year Book of the Churches." This has become a valuable encyclopedia about the religious life of America, containing the most reliable statistical information and

data concerning the organization and personnel of every church.

Through the General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains, located at the Washington Office, the Protestant chaplains are secured for the Army and Navy and help given them in their work. Largely as a result of the interest of the Council in the chaplains, a place has been secured for religion in the Army, which has led to the observance of the Sabbath, a new reverence for worship, more wholesome social life and better influences for the upbuilding of character among a great body of young men.

United in Other Work

Many other phases of the work of the Council cannot be described in this brief review—such as the work in behalf of the churches of the Canal Zone, for the erection of which the Council is securing funds with a view to solving the tremendous moral problem in the midst of which our soldiers and sailors and many other Americans in that part of the world have to live. The publication of the annual topics for the Week of Prayer, the Easter Message, the Labor Sunday Message, and a host of other important activities in behalf of all the churches, would have to be indicated if

anything like a complete statement were to be presented.

For fuller information concerning the work of the Federal Council, the reader is referred to the volume entitled "The Churches Allied for Common Tasks," which includes the report for the Council during the last four years, "The Progress of Church Federation," and the bi-monthly "Federal Council Bulletin."

United in Study

Underlying all this work is a "thinking department," known as the Committee on the Religious Outlook, which exists for the sole purpose of thorough study of the more challenging problems confronting the churches. It rests upon the conviction that church leaders need not only to think, but to think together. Such volumes as "The Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War," "The Church and Industrial Reconstruction," "Christian Unity: Its Principles and Possibilities," indicate the permanent value of this study and the need for other volumes now projected.

Through a Publicity Department, vital news of religious interest and articles interpreting the significance of the cooperative work of the churches are sent regularly to the religious and to the secular press. Through a printing

department pamphlets and literature on important phases of the churches' work can be sent without delay to the whole body of one hundred and fifty thousand pastors in the country so as to make concerted action possible.

How the Council is Organized

The Council does not exercise a directing control over the churches, but is rather their own agency for cooperation and common expression, directed and controlled by their representatives.

No independent overhead organization is set up. Its work is done through the guidance of a central council, in which all the constituent denominations in the Council have official and proportional representation. The Council is made up of four hundred members elected by the denominational assemblies. It meets every four years and has an Executive Committee meeting annually and an Administrative Committee meeting monthly, both of which also consist of official representatives of the churches.

On the Administrative Committee are representatives of other cooperative agencies which are carrying on specialized work for the churches. These are at present the Home Missions Council, the Council of Women for Home Missions, the Foreign Missions Conference,

the Federation of Woman's Boards of Foreign Missions, the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations, the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A., the National Board of the Y. W. C. A., the American Bible Society, the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America and the Student Volunteer Movement. Through the contacts thus secured unity of action is made possible on the part of all the churches' cooperative agencies.

The Significance of the Council in American Church Life

The Federal Council marks a definite stage in the development of Christian cooperation and unity, representing, as it does, the first attempt to bring the denominations themselves into continuing cooperative relationships. Its positive achievements already show beyond question that enlarging cooperation is possible.

Through the Council the Protestant churches are saying to the world that their rich diversity must not mean divisiveness and that they are now ready for united action in a great number of challenging common tasks. They are insisting also that in the development of the movement for Christian unity it is not necessary to create an independent

or irresponsible organization but that the responsibility can be placed directly upon the denominations themselves. More important than all else, the experience of the churches in the Council has demonstrated the fact that the pathway to fuller unity lies through the field of practical service to mankind.

How the Council is Supported

The whole program which has been set forth in this document is being carried on during the present year by a budget of only \$250,000. When one considers that this work is done in behalf of thirty denominations and that if they were to carry on any of these activities independently it would cost each of them well nigh as much as it now does to serve the thirty, one can appreciate the fact that the Council represents not only a great ideal but also practical efficiency.

Up to the present time the Council has not drawn upon denominational treasuries for funds to any extent, although it is hoped that as soon as the denominational machinery may be adjusted to interdenominational action this method of support may be much increased. Meanwhile the Council is supported in the main by men and women of faith and vision who see in

the Council's work a rich opportunity of serving both the churches and the world. A Board of Finance made up of business men who are interested in the cooperation of the churches oversees the financial program of the Council and insures rigid economy.

A Word to the Reader

The reader of this story is earnestly urged:

1. To use his influence to further cooperation on the part of the churches of his local community.

2. To acquaint himself more fully with the wide scope of church federation, by communicating with the office of the Federal Council.

3. Finally, in addition to this moral support, together with his prayer, counsel and advice, to express his interest in Christian unity at work, by a subscription to the work of the Federal Council, which may, if desired, be designated for any particular task in which he is most interested. The treasurer is Alfred R. Kimball, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City.

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